

TRUE RELATION

OF A

Devilish Attempt

To Fire the Town of

BARNET,

In the County of

HARTFORD.

*On Thursday the 16th of this Instant October 1679.**In a Letter to a Friend in LONDON.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Jonathan Robinson*, at the Golden Lion in
St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1679.

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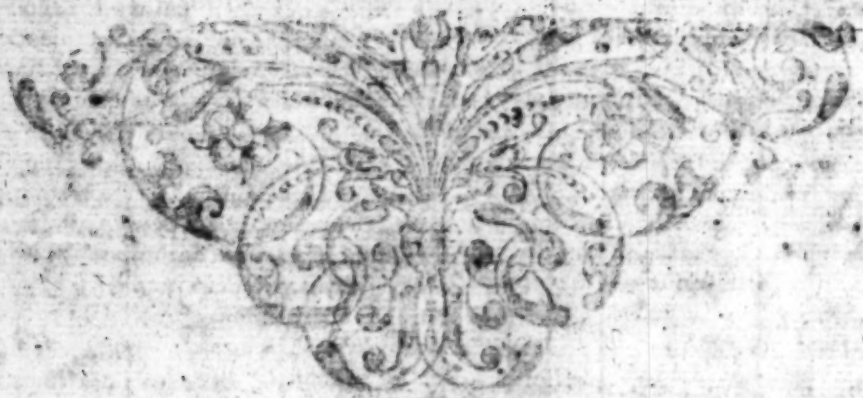
To Fire the Town of

BARRINGTON

In the County of

HARTFORD

On Thursday the 18th of this Instant October 1679.
In a Letter to a Friend in LONDON.



L O N D O N

Printed for Jonathan Robins, at the Golden Lion in
St. Pauls Church-Yard, 1679.

A True Relation of an Attempt, to Fire the Town of BARNET.

I Cannot excuse my self of acquainting you with a very late attempt of Firing our Town of *Barnet*; which though but a little one, was not beneath the Notice of our known Aversaries, as your great and famous City neither was, nor is above it. And though God hath frustrated their design, yet the Evulsion of it with so much diligence, will be of no small use to stop the Mouths of those, who decry the belief of all such Attempts as ungrounded; the true Narrative is as follows. On Thursday *Oct 10* at Night, about one of the Clock, the Mistress of one of the Houses attempted to be Fired; as she lay in her Bed, after a little slumber, awaked, and supposed she smelled a smoke so unusual, as filled her with suspicion of Fire to be in some place of the House. Upon this occasion, some of the Family were raised to make a search; but all places being searched where such a thing might be expected, nothing was found that could be the least occasion of suspicion: But the smoke and the stench of it increasing, confirmed the suspicion so, that they thought fit to awaken their next Neighbour, and oblige him to search his House, and especially his Cellar, where he sometimes dried Tobacco, and from whence they supposed the smell of the Fire came. But after the strictest Examination, nothing could be found that might give any satisfaction of the place where it was, though the symptoms of Fire somewhat increased, as made it beyond doubt that they were in danger. At length one going into a Shop next the Street, where never any Fire used to be made, observed that in a corner about two or three foot from the Street, the smell was hottest, and an apparant token that the Fire was not far off. Upon this, divers Neighbours being gathered together for their Assistance, both in the search, and if there should be further occasion, for the quenching of it; some of them brake down the Wall near to the Ground, which was of, Wainscot and other Boards. No sooner was this done, but the Nest was discovered, and there they found a Fire kindled so far, that it had burnt a considerable part of the Timber next adjoining, and within a few inches of the Deal-boarder. But raking the place (which was as you shall hear so unusual, and so unfit a place for Fire; except upon an industrious Plot for Mischief) they found a considerable quantity of Combustible Matter amassed together, partly burnt to Ashes, and partly unconsumed: But there having been much Water thrown upon it, they could not well discern what it was, but that the ground of it was Charcoal; and that all Circumstances considered, it was beyond all dispute disposed here to fire the whole Town; which Circumstances I shall exactly and faithfully relate, that not only a due Conclusion, but also a due improvement may be made of it.

There is in *Barnet* a row of Houses, striking down from the Church to the Market-place, which divides the two great Streets, and is so posited, that being Fired, it would be hard for either side of the Town to escape it. In this Row, two of the most considerable Houses were so disjoyned (having each of them their proper Walls) that betwixt the Walls there was a Vacancy, but no larger at the entrance than would admit with some difficulty of a Man's Arm to be thrust in. Here it was (and as I said before, about two or three foot from the Street) that the Fire, and the Combustible Matter was found, which was as far as an Arm could reach from the Street side: But from within the Houses there was no Passage to it; nor had there been any Fire in the foresaid Cellar, many Months before. Upon the report of this, many Gentlemen, and others, repaired to the place next Day to satisfy themselves of the truth of the

Matter related: And upon the most strict Examination of all particulars, there were not any (though most averse from the belief of such designed, and wicked Practices) but were fully convinced, that it was an industrious Attempt to consume the Town to Ashes.

Sir, I should not have given you the trouble of these Lines, but from the sense of our duty to acknowledge the good Hand of God upon us, in so remarkable a Deliverance: And although the success of this Mischievous Design might have rendered our Narrative more affecting, and deplorable: Yet as the watchful Eye of God over us to the preventing of the sad effects, is to us the greater Mercy; so the wretched Contrivance, of more wretched Authors, is not unworthy of your special notice. You have in this Evidence sufficient to possess you, that the same Spirits which produced those many and dreadful Conflagrations, is not yet dead, nor asleep; but attempting all manner of Ways to promote their Hellish Interests, founded on the Ruines of all whom they are pleased to call Hereticks. And that all Protestants however distinguished, are equally obnoxious to their Cruelties, is no matter of dispute with Men of a mean Intelligence. I cannot pass by one circumstance of our Danger without a Remark. The two Houses betwixt which this Fire was kindled, were inhabited, the one of them by a strict observer of the present Rites of the Church of England; the other by a Dissenter: But both of them Persons of a sober Life, and a general good Reputation. But this is no matter of Consideration with our common Adversaries the Papists (upon whom we may confidently, without uncharitableness, charge the Fact) the Sacrifice of one, and others yea, one and all is most grateful to them. It is rather my Wish than my Hope, that such Minute Attempts upon such inconsiderable places as *Barnet*, should confine their Malice, or that the disappointment should discourage them from far greater. It is high time for all to be awakened, and you Citizens of *London* especially, who, as you are looked on as the greatest *Lee* to their Interests, so you are the greatest Object of their Hatred and Conspiracies: But as hitherto, the Lord hath in a wonderful manner, in despite of all Powers and Policies (befriending them) detected, and prevented their Mischievous Devices: So let us, as our Duty and Interest, stir up our selves to lay hold on Him by the Prayer of Faith, and a holy Christian Life, that he may yet be Omniscient, and Almighty for us, and against all those that rise up against us. We are Besotted, if such Instances keep not alive the apprehensions of our Enemies Guilt, and our own Dangers. Let us not be wanting to our selves, and God will be All-sufficient.

There were three Persons strangers suspected of this Fact, who came to a small Inn in the Town requiring Lodging; but although they were promised Entertainment, they departed before Bed-time, and it is not known that they lodged that Night any where in the Town; but three such like Persons were seen skulking not long before the Fire brake out, but not after. And for our parts we keep no Watch, to Examine and Apprehend such Persons, it may be we may now learn by our Danger, to be at the Charge of some better means for our Security. Farewell.

Barnet, Octob.

Tours, M. D.

• 20. 1679.

FINIS.